

# Psalm 23

**Themes:** journey, life, rest, restoration, righteousness, difficulty, suffering, death, goodness, mercy, enemies, forgiveness

**Inspired by:** Psalm 23, New King James version

## Opening Words

Are you ready for a story?

*From now on keep your eyes looking down.*

Let's turn this upside down.

Now we have time to breathe.

In a circle of trust we listen and explore feelings.

There's space to wonder and play, in love.

Your story, my story, our story. Let's be curious about this story.



Words	Actions (storyteller's perspective)
There was a person called David and he wrote Psalm 23 - to express how he felt about God.	<i>In this story there are five 'spaces' in a clockwise direction - green pastures, still waters, paths of righteousness, valley of shadow of death, the table (which is back to the start). Move the sand to make the left hand side flat - for the pasture and still waters - and ensure there is plenty of sand in the right hand side so you can create a path and a deep valley from 12 o'clock till 5 o'clock.</i>
You are my shepherd, I shall not want.	<i>Place one sheep at 6 o'clock and then a shepherd to the left of the sheep.</i>
You make me lie down in green pastures.	<i>Place down six green leaves between 7 and 9 o'clock with a path between them. Move the shepherd into the pastures with the sheep following. Stop in the middle and lay the sheep down.</i>
You lead me beside still waters,	<i>Place down four blue waves between 9 and 11 o'clock. Walk them along the edge of the water. Sometimes move the shepherd and sheep together and sometimes move the shepherd first. (Using two hands obscures the view).</i>
you restore my soul.	<i>Pause them by the waters.</i>
You lead me in the paths of righteousness	<i>Move the shepherd along the path, with the sheep following.</i>
for your name's sake.	<i>Stop in the middle.</i>
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,	<i>Place grey blobs on the slopes of the valley. The sheep hesitate as they are about to enter the valley. Move the shepherd through the valley with the sheep following.</i>
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.	<i>Stop in the middle of the valley.</i>
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.	<i>Move the shepherd and the sheep out of the valley. Place the blanket in front of the shepherd and sheep. Place two 'enemy' sheep right on the edge of the sand so they are either side of the shepherd when you look straight on.</i>

## Words

## Actions (storyteller's perspective)

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You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

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Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

*Hold the heart in the palms of your hands.*

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and I will dwell in your house for ever. *Place the heart in the centre.*

*Walk the 'enemy' sheep who is on the left side of the shepherd towards the table. Leave the other sheep where they are. This leaves the ending open.*

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*Please see our training resources or come on an OutoftheBox course to develop in the art of holding a safe and brave space for contemplation, reflection and dialogue.*

## Wondering

*You are now engaging with the group so look up, and say:* Let's be curious about how we feel.

I wonder what part of this story you like?

I wonder what part you don't like?

I wonder what the story reminds you of?

## Community Play .

*Facilitate play with the materials to further explore feelings and to focus on an issue or idea, e.g.*

*How are you feeling? or What does your day look like? or What does your community look like?*

*Who is/are the shepherd/s?*

*Where are the green pastures / still waters / paths of righteousness / valley of the shadow of death?*

*Who are the enemies?*

*Where is the table?*

*You may invite people to place themselves in the picture using one of the wooden figures.*

## Closing Words

*Before the story is put away, ask:* Is there anything else that needs to be said or done?

*Hold out your hands as you say:* For all that's been said and for all that's not been said - thank you.

*Invite participants to remove the objects they put down, then put the other objects away in reverse order.*

## Personal Response

*Time to play and contemplate, e.g. in movement, art & craft, writing, playing with the story materials.*

## Celebration

*Share food and drink to allow people to connect socially and prepare to leave the session.*

## Materials

OutoftheBox can be told anywhere, e.g. sand, cloth, a clearing in leaves. You will need representations of a shepherd and three sheep (e.g. stones or nativity figures) or tell this story without any figures by indicating the journey with your hand. OutoftheBox supplies one box of beautiful resources to share all the stories.

You can become a member to access the stories and the self led learning resources at

[www.outoftheboxstories.org](http://www.outoftheboxstories.org)